

THE GUARDIAN

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Phone: (559) 675-7766 • Email: dblessing@madera-county.com



This Warrior is enjoying some down time in the RVN & about to go home

**A NOTE
FROM
DENNIS
BLESSING**

**Visit our Web Site at:
www.madera-county.com Go to "Select a
Department" then scroll down to "Veterans"
At Veteran Resources find back copies**

NO MATTER YOUR FEELINGS TOWARDS
"THE WAR" **YOU MUST . . .**

LOVE THE WARRIOR
LOVE THE WARRIOR



Veterans Service Office

**Madera Veterans Office
321 W. Yosemite Ave.
Madera Ca 93637
Suite 101**

Hours

**Mon., Through Fri. 8-5
Dennis Blessing, Service Officer
(559) 675-7766**

**Madera Transportation
(888) 826-2838 ext 6424
from Merced (72 Hr. Notice)
Oakhurst (559) 658-5399**



Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld awards a Bronze Star to Army Spc. Lucas Crowe at Forward Operating Base Courage in Mosul, Iraq, on Dec. 24, 2005. Crowe took action that saved a two-year old Iraqi boy's life after he was found in his family's flooded basement in Mosul on Election Day, Dec. 15, 2005. Crowe performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the boy and comforted him until he could receive proper medical attention. Rumsfeld has been visiting in the troops in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan and Iraq thanking them for their service and wishing them a happy holiday season. Crowe is attached to the 2-1st Infantry Regiment, Multi-National Force Northwest. DoD photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Chad J. McNeeley, U.S. Navy.

News you can use News you can use

Anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan waits for people to show up at her book



signing near



President Bush's ranch
on Saturday, Nov. 26,
2005 in Crawford,
Texas



The Guardian is published monthly by Dennis Blessing, Service Officer of the Madera County Veterans Service Office. It is freely issued, via email, to all Madera Veterans and Service Organizations.

The primary purpose of this publication is to provide County Veterans with a timely news source; effectively informing veterans of VA up-dates and other pertinent information. Hopefully, it will also serve as an inter-group vehicle, announcing important activities and information offered by other local service organizations.

Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

Dennis Blessing, Publisher

Phone: (559) 675-7766 Email: dblessing@madera-county.com

Cindy's Thanksgiving Expenses

1. Airfare to Crawford, Tx.
\$200.00
2. Cindys memorial stone
\$10.00
3. Buffet for her TOPS friends
\$125,000.00
4. Book signing attendees & photos!
PRICELESS!!



THE REP REPORT



Death Pension

What is it?:

Death Pension is a benefit paid to eligible dependents of deceased wartime veterans. It is an income supplement program for low-income dependents of wartime veterans.

What requirements must a wartime veteran have met to have his/her dependents qualify for the benefit?:

- Military discharge must have been other than dishonorable.

AND

- Veteran must have served at least 90 days with one day out of the ninety having occurred during a war period.

AND

- The dependant is the surviving spouse or unmarried child of the deceased veteran.

AND

- The dependents annual countable income is below an annual limit set by law (currently \$591.00 a month).



I meet the above criteria, I meet the above criteria, how much will Veteran Affairs pay me?

VA pays eligible spouses & dependents the difference between their countable income & a VA rate set by law.

EXAMPLE:

Surviving spouse receives \$500.00 in income a month. VA Death Pension will bring her income up to \$591.00 each month by supplementing her \$500.00 income with \$91.00.

How do I apply?

- Complete VA form 21-534
- Submit a copy of veterans military discharge document
- Submit a copy of veterans death certificate
- Submit a copy of marriage certificate
- Submit a copy of children's birth certificate
- Submit all documents to your nearest VA regional office

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VA WEBSITE:

WWW.VA.GOV

VA REGIONAL OFFICE:

1-800-827-1000



Jesus S. Lopez

**Madera County Veteran
Service Representative**

(559) 675-7766

**321 W. Yosemite, Suite 101
Madera Ca 93637**



AMERICAN LEGION

Madera Post 11, 200 South G Street

Support Our Troops

RAFFLE

BUY A RAFFLE TICKET TO SUPPORT
THE AMERICAN LEGION
\$5.00 EACH REALLY CHEAP



American Legion
Commander
Roger Baldwin
Madera Post 11
200 South G Street



The U.S. Model 1903 Springfield Rifle replaced the Krag-Jorgensen and was the primary U.S. battle rifle until 1936, when it was replaced as the primary battle U.S. battle rifle by the M1 Garand. In 1942 Remington Arms redesigned the 1903 rifle using some stamped parts and designated it the **U.S. Model 1903A3**.

The American Legion Membership Application			
<hr/>		<hr/>	
(Name)		(Phone)	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
(Mailing Address)		(Date)	
<hr/>		<hr/>	
(City)	(State)	(Zip)	(Post #)
<hr/>			<hr/>
Please check appropriate eligibility dates and branch of service below			(Dues)
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug 2, 1990 – cessation of hostilities as determined by U.S. Government			<div></div>
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 20, 1989 – Jan. 31, 1990			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug. 24, 1982 – July 31, 1984			
<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975			
<input type="checkbox"/> June 25, 1950 – Jan. 31, 1955			
<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 7, 1941 – Dec. 31, 1946			
<input type="checkbox"/> April 6, 1917 – Nov 11, 1918			
<input type="checkbox"/> Merchant Marines 12/7/41 – 8/15/45 (only eligibility)			
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Army			
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Navy			
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Air Force			
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Marines			
<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Coast Guard			
I certify that I served at least one day of active military duty during the dates marked above and was honorably discharged or am still serving honorably.			
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Signature of applicant		Name of recruiter	

Receipt of Dues
(Please Print)

From _____ for 19 _____ Post # _____

\$ _____

Recruiter's Name _____

Recruiter's Signature _____



VETERANS of FOREIGN WARS



**VFW Commander
George Bloch
Post 1981
200 South G Street
Madera Ca 93639
(559) 661-9038**

Taken from *VFW Magazine*, Nov/Dec05, p. 10

Combat Action Badge Joins VFW-Qualifying Awards

Recognizing the nature of warfare in Iraq—where there are no traditional front lines—the Army created the Combat Action Badge (CAB) on May 2, 2005. The CAB is the most recent award qualifying recipients for VFW membership.

The award recognizes soldiers who come under fire in combat zones but are not eligible for the Combat Infantryman Badge or Combat Medical Badge. The CAB is retroactive to Sept 18, 2001.

It can be awarded to soldiers in any military occupational specialty (MOS) serving in areas where hostile-fire or imminent-danger pay is authorized.

Qualifying combat actions include mortar, rocket, rocket propelled grenade, improvised explosive device or suicide bomb attacks. Recipients must demonstrate honorable action while engaging or being engaged by the enemy.

The reasons for creating the award are exemplified by the actions of five soldiers from the 15th Personnel Services (PS) Battalion, 1st Cav Division. On Sept. 28, 2003, they were traveling in a convoy from Kuwait to Al Taqqadum, Iraq, about 50 miles west of Baghdad.

They stopped for mechanical repairs and received incoming fire from nearby buildings. Several soldiers in the convoy returned fire. No GIs were hurt and no enemy fighters were confirmed killed, but they were fully engaged.

CWO2 Mark Trepanier, commander of the 15th PS Battalion soldiers in the convoy, told *Army Times* that he never fired another shot during the year he was in Iraq. Nevertheless, creation of the CAB acknowledges that all GIs in Iraq and Afghanistan, regardless of MOS, must be ready to engage the enemy anywhere at any time.

Updates on VFW qualifying Campaign Medals

Operations in the Persian Gulf Region: All air, sea and ground operations associated with enforcing the former no-fly zones in Iraq that fell under the (AFEM), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, closed March 18, 2003.

Bosnia: The U. S. Mission in Bosnia was declared complete Nov. 24, 2004. Eligibility for the AFEM, however, is still open because a small number of U. S. troops rotate there to work with NATO in tracking down war criminals.

Navy Expeditionary Medal: Issued for *Operation Determined Response* from Oct. 12, 2000 to Dec. 15, 2002, following the *USS Cole* bombing off Yemen.

OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God, I do, of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter, bylaws and Ritual of this order and I will always be loyal thereto. I will never wrong or defraud this organization—nor a member thereof nor permit any wrong to be done to either if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership any person not eligible nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone not authorized to receive it any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States cease in any way I will consider this pledge as binding outside of the order as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge upon the honor of a true comrade and a citizen of our great republic.

Applicant's Signature

I have investigated the character and campaign medal service of the applicant and hereby endorse him/her as eligible and worthy of membership in the VFW.

Signed _____

Date _____ Member of Post # _____

CERTIFICATION

Admission Fee paid \$ _____ Dues paid \$ _____

Date _____ LM Fee paid \$ _____

(See Sec. 104 bylaws)

The Investigating Committee has performed its duties and recommends ☐ Approval ☐ Rejection.

(Signatures of Committee below)

Committee Member

Committee Member

Committee Member

Applicant approved _____ Obligated _____

Date _____ Date _____

The annual dues of each member includes a year's subscription to the VFW Magazine, official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Each applicant, upon acceptance, will be so notified and furnished with an official dues receipt showing membership for the year for which dues or Life Membership fees have been paid.



LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES

Attained Age	Fee
Through 30	\$245
31-40	235
41-50	215
51-60	195
61-70	165
71-80	125
81+	85

Any applicant whose 31st, 41st, 51st, 61st, 71st or 81st birthday will occur after the date of application and on or before December 31st of the current calendar year, shall pay only the fee that would be required on his next birthday.

FROM THE FRONT



Iraqi army soldiers line up to vote in the Iraqi elections in the village of Assariya, Iraq, on Dec. 12, 2005. Iraqi citizens will be voting on Dec. 15, 2005, to elect Iraq's first free, permanent parliamentary government. The soldiers are voting early so that they can provide security during the general election. DoD photo by Spc. Charles W. Gill, U.S. Army.



Iraqi soldiers read a poster outside a polling station as they wait in line to vote along with other Iraqi security forces in Hayji, Iraq, on Dec. 12, 2005. Iraqi citizens will be voting on Dec. 15, 2005, to elect Iraq's first free, permanent parliamentary government. DoD photo by Tech. Sgt. Andy

FROM THE FRONT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE, IRAQ



Iraqi voters line up outside a polling site in Barwana, Iraq, on Dec. 15, 2005. Iraqi citizens are voting to elect Iraq's first free, permanent parliamentary government. DoD photo by Sgt. James P. Aguilar, U.S. Marine Corps.



A little girl clutches an Iraqi flag as her parents vote in a polling booth at the Al-Kunaytarah School in Jurf as Sakhr District, Iraq, on Dec. 15, 2005. Iraqi citizens are voting to elect Iraq's first free, permanent parliamentary government. DoD photo by Lance Cpl. Michael J O'Brien, U.S. Marine Corps.

FROM THE FRONT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE, IRAQ



Iraqi men proudly show their inked-stained fingers after voting in Hayji, Iraq, on Dec. 15, 2005. Iraqi citizens are voting to elect Iraq's first free, permanent parliamentary government. DoD photo by Tech. Sgt. Andy Dunaway, U.S. Air Force.



U.S. Army Sgt. Jose Rivera (right), Pfc. Richard Robinson (center) and Spc. Diego Cruz wait for the signal to enter a house while conducting a foot patrol in Bayji, Iraq, on Dec. 10, 2005. The soldiers are attached to 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, deployed from Fort Campbell, Ky. DoD photo by Tech. Sgt. Andy Dunaway, U.S.

FROM THE FRONT



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

NEWS ARTICLES

Official Cites Tough, But Surmountable, Challenges for Iraqis

By Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28, 2005 – The Iraqi people won't have an easy time setting up a new national government, but they are resolved to surmount all difficulties, a senior Defense Department official said here today.

"One of the big challenges that's in front of the Iraqi people is seating a government that reflects and respects the views of all the Iraqi people, and doing it in a way in which all Iraqis can feel included in the political process," DoD spokesman Bryan Whitman told Pentagon reporters.

Whitman had responded to a reporter's question about alleged discord among some of Iraq's Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish factions in the wake of the Dec. 15 nationwide elections.

The Pentagon spokesman said recent rhetoric put out by some Iraqi groups is illustrative of the political landscape of the new Iraq.

"What you are seeing is all factions -- Sunnis, Kurds, Shiites -- are all talking, and they're talking to each other," Whitman said. "And they are working out their differences through a political process and not through violence."

On Dec. 15 Iraqis voted for new members to sit in the country's 275-member, four-year national assembly, or parliament. Votes are still being counted, but the election is widely acknowledged as a success, with 68 percent of registered Iraqis having cast their ballots.

It's also acknowledged that Shiite-backed candidates likely will constitute the majority of the new parliament. Shiites account for around 60 percent of the Iraqi population, while Kurds and Sunnis each make up about 20 percent.

Forming the new government, Whitman said, is an Iraqi challenge. But, "the coalition will continue to be there to provide the type of environment, along with the Iraqi security forces, to allow that process to take hold and to get traction," he said.

"Nobody has ever claimed that this was going to be something that is easy," Whitman said. "But, one only has to spend a few hours in Iraq to really understand the dedication and how committed the Iraqi people are to making this work, too."

FROM THE FRONT



Soldiers of B Battery, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, listen to a pre-mission briefing before heading out Dec. 13 to prepare for the Iraqi elections. Defense Dept. photo by Jim Garamone



Iraqi voters walk to the election center to cast their ballots in the Iraqi National Elections, Dec. 15, 2005. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Michael R. McMaugh

FROM THE FRONT



Iraqi citizens wait in line to cast their ballots at Al Jazar Practicing High School in Diwaniyah, Iraq, Dec. 15. Photo by Iraqi Army Pfc. Hadi Kadhim Diulmi



Iraqi army soldiers review voting material before they vote along with other Iraqi security forces in Hayji, Iraq, Dec. 12, 2005. On Dec. 15, Iraqi citizens will elect their first permanent parliamentary government, which will lead the new democracy for the next four years. Iraqi security forces vote early so that they can provide security during the general election. U.S. Air Force by Tech. Sgt. Andy Dunaway

FROM THE FRONT



U.S. Army soldiers Pfc. Caleb Tando and Sgt. Chris Dellerba, both with 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, Mortars Platoon, 101st Airborne Division talk with an Iraqi army soldier. U.S. Air Force by Tech. Sgt. Andy Dunaway



U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Michael Carner stands watch as Iraqi men line up in Al Asad, Iraq, to be in-processed as poll workers during the upcoming parliamentary elections Dec. 8, 2005. These volunteers will be transported to multiple polling sites within the Al Anbar Province. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. James P. Aguilar